Engaging Students as Partners

‘Engaging students as partners is a powerful idea, the implementation of which has the potential to transform HE’ (Healey et al., 2016).

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Brief biography

• HE Consultant and Researcher; Emeritus Professor University of Gloucestershire (UoG), UK; Visiting Professor University College London, UK; The Humboldt Distinguished Scholar in Research-Based Learning McMaster University, Canada; Adjunct Professor Macquarie University, Australia; International Teaching Fellow, University College Cork, Ireland; Visiting Fellow University of Queensland, Australia

• National Teaching Fellow (NTF) and Principal Fellow HE Academy

• International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Distinguished Service Award 2015

• Economic geographer and previously Director Centre for Active Learning UoG

• Ex-VP for Europe International Society for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

• International advisor and evaluator to two Australian NTFs on Students as Partners

• Co-leader of International Summer Institute on Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (McMaster University) and Senior Editor International Journal for Students as Partners

• Research interests: linking research and teaching; engaging students in research and inquiry, students as partners and change agents; scholarship of teaching and learning; bringing about change in curricula
Engaging students as partners

One minute each way

In pairs you each have ONE minute to tell your partner about one experience you have of engaging students as partners

The job of your partner is to listen enthusiastically but NOT interrupt.
Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education

Mick Healey, Abbi Flint and Kathy Harrington
July 2014

Cited over 100x in 2.5 years
Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education

Based on Healey, Flint and Harrington 2014, 25.
Reproduced in Healey et al. 2016 Teaching and Learning Inquiry

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Students as partners: Reflections on a conceptual model

What does the ‘Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education model’ mean to you?

Comments and clarifications
Students as partners: Reflections on a conceptual model

- Origins – HEA to TLI
- A subset of student engagement
- A way of doing things rather than an outcome in itself
- Two distinct literatures, four overlapping areas
- Many initiatives involve 2+ areas
- Partnership between students and staff, other students, & others in L&T in HE
- Developing learning partnership communities
- Stimulating conversations about SaP and giving a language to situate practice and policies
Engaging students as partners in learning and teaching

In pairs each skim read a *different* case study (pp.3-11).

- Learning, teaching and assessment
- Subject-based research and inquiry
- Scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)
- Curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy
- Integrated approaches

Discuss whether any of the ideas may be amended for application in your context.

10 minutes
Students as partners in quality enhancement of learning and teaching

“There is a subtle, but extremely important, difference between an institution that ‘listens’ to students and responds accordingly, and an institution that gives students the opportunity to explore areas that they believe to be significant, to recommend solutions and to bring about the required changes. The concept of ‘listening to the student voice’ – implicitly if not deliberately – supports the perspective of student as ‘consumer’, whereas ‘students as change agents’ explicitly supports a view of the student as ‘active collaborator’ and ‘co-producer’, with the potential for transformation.” (Dunne in Dunne and Zandstra, 2011, 4).
Students as change agents (mostly) in global learning

In a different pair each skim read one different mini-case study of engaging students as:

1. Pedagogical consultants, ambassadors and evaluators (p.12)
2. Co-designers of curriculum (p.13)
3. Teachers and assessors (p.14)
4. SoTL practitioners (p.14)
5. Strategy developers and advisors (p.15)

Discuss whether any of the ideas may be amended for application in your context

5 minutes
**Engagement through partnership**

**Authenticity:** the rationale for all parties to invest in partnership is meaningful and credible.

**Honesty:** all parties are honest about what they can contribute to partnership and about where the boundaries of partnership lie.

**Inclusivity:** there is equality of opportunity and any barriers (structural or cultural) that prevent engagement are challenged.

**Reciprocity:** all parties have an interest in, and stand to benefit from working and/or learning in partnership.

**Empowerment:** power is distributed appropriately and ways of working and learning promote healthy power dynamics.

**Trust:** all parties take time to get to know one-another and can be confident they will be treated with respect and fairness.

**Courage:** all parties are encouraged to critique and challenge practices, structures and approaches that undermine partnership, and are enabled to take risks to develop new ways of working and learning.

**Plurality:** all parties recognise and value the unique talents, perspectives and experiences that individuals contribute to partnership.

**Responsibility:** all parties share collective responsibility for the aims of the partnership, and individual responsibility for the contribution they make.

Source: HEA (2015)
Students as partners and change agents

In pairs think of an example you are familiar with or one of the case studies you looked at earlier of students as partners in learning and teaching in HE and discuss how far these principles apply.
Where possible pairs of staff and students are invited to participate in either one or two consecutive two-day workshops OR a 3.5 day Writing Retreat

Alternatively teams of 4-6 faculty and students (at least two of each) from an institution(s) can apply to join a 3.5 day ‘Change Institute’.

Facilitated by an international team of experienced staff and students from Australia, Canada, UK and US

https://macblog.mcmaster.ca/summer-institute/
International Journal for Students as Partners (IJSaP)

- Research articles, case studies, opinion pieces, reflective essays and reviews
- International editorial team of students and staff from Australia, Canada, UK and US

IJSaP explores new perspectives, practices, and policies regarding how students and staff are working in partnership to enhance learning and teaching in higher education

https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/ijsap
Students as partners and change agents: A vision

“... it should be the norm, not the exception, that students are engaged as co-partners and co-designers in all university and department learning and teaching initiatives, strategies and practices.”

(Healey, 2012)
Students as partners: Conclusions

If students as partners is to be truly integrated into HE then the nature of higher education will need to be reconceptualised.

“universities need to move towards creating inclusive scholarly knowledge-building communities. … The notion of inclusive scholarly knowledge-building communities invites us to consider new ideas about who the scholars are in universities and how they might work in partnership.” (Brew, 2007, 4)

There is a need to do more thinking ‘outside the box’
The End